

*My proposed draft reply
to Hornig*

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Hornig

I concur with your memorandum of October 13 (BYE 57350/67), and agree that we should ask Dr. Flax, on the Committee's behalf, to establish tasks and guidelines which reflect the points you made in that memorandum. Such tasks and guidelines would supplement those laid down by the Joint Chiefs for the Air Force study now under way.

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In addition, I have the following comments:

To obtain maximum usefulness and validity, flights planned for sensor comparison should be flown on courses which duplicate, to the maximum extent possible, the speed, altitude, and geographical situation of North Viet Nam flights. On such flights, the target complexes photographed should likewise duplicate to the maximum extent possible the target complexes of North Viet Nam.

In view of the increasing threat to the vehicle, each aircraft should be required to "penetrate" the simulated denied area at its highest profile, compatible with the range requirements of North Viet Nam missions. This verified, typical operational profile would then be available to the vulnerability analysis group, supplementing the curves supplied by Dr. Flax as a performance base.

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Approximately twenty-five percent of the current Viet Nam photography is acquired when the A-12 is in a high bank; many target complexes in North Viet Nam are available only during these severe turns because of the restricted geography. Therefore, during the comparison flights, a significant amount of the comparative photography should be taken at high bank angles.

The increased risk connected with the second crew member of the SR-71 must indeed be carefully examined and weighed against his value to the mission; this value is closely connected with the value of the Technical Objective camera (I assume only one for the Viet Nam mission) and the high resolution radar, whose usefulness in the North Viet Nam mission remains to be established.

Comparison of the A-12 and SR-71 infra-red cameras and high resolution radars is not contemplated at this time, as these two alternate sensors were retired from the active A-12 inventory during this past year as a part of the phase down.

Finally, I believe that it is important that we emphasize that these comparative studies do not bear in any way on the primary role of the SR-71 in SAC's SIOP role, but are limited to present and potential missions analagous to that now being performed by the A-12 in Viet Nam.

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